

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETATIONS TASK FORCE INTERPRETATION

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Code: NFPA 101, 1997 Edition. Section 13-3.6.3.2

Background: Some AHJs require that doors to hazardous areas off of a corridor in existing health care occupancies be provided with positive latching. Section 13-3.6.3.2 of the Life Safety Code requires doors to be provided with means suitable for keeping the door closed that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction. It does not state that latching is specifically required. The means used must be capable of keeping the door fully closed if a force of 5 lbf is applied at the latch edge of the door. The appendix note to 13-3.6.3.2 states that a number of options exist for patient sleeping room doors such as"Doors protecting openings to patient sleeping rooms or treatment rooms, or spaces having a similar combustible loading might be held closed using a closer exerting a minimum closing force of 5 lbf on the door latch stile." Although the appendix note does not address doors to hazardous areas off corridors, some AHJs permit a self-closing device to serve as the means for keeping the door closed. For sprinkler protected hazardous areas in existing health care occupancies, Section 13-3.2.1 requires doors be equipped with self or automatic closers.

Question: Is positive latching required for corridor doors to hazardous areas that are sprinkler protected in existing health care occupancies?

Answer: NO. Provided that a self closing or automatic closing device is installed on the door and that such device can meet the 5 pounds (force) criteria of 101: 13-3.6.3.2.